

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of data retrieval by a user from a distributed database, comprising the steps of:

~~collecting saving metadata that pertain pertaining to real data stored in databases distributed on a network by a second server via in first servers distributed on the network associated with each of said databases; and saving the collected metadata;~~

collecting metadata saved in said first servers and storing said metadata in a metadata database of a second server without storing the real data represented by said metadata;

extracting metadata that matches a user retrieval request by search of the collected from a user terminal by searching metadata stored in said metadata database, and transmitting a retrieval result including information of a location of the first server saving the metadata that matches said user retrieval request, to said user terminal;

inputting a real data retrieval condition for the database on the basis of a the retrieval result of the metadata database transmitted to said user terminal;

issuing a real data retrieval request of the real data condition from said user terminal to the first server indicated by the extracted metadata on the basis of said information of a location of the first server,

wherein said real data retrieval condition is issued to said first server by bypassing said second server; and

retrieving, by the first server, the real data from the corresponding database in accordance with the retrieval request after converting said real data retrieval condition into a format which is concordant with the database.

Claims 2-6: (Canceled).

7. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein, when the metadata which is saved in the first servers and pertaining to the real data has been updated, said metadata is stored in said metadata database of said second server without storing the real data pertaining to said metadata.

8. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the metadata which is saved in the first server and pertaining to the real data is stored in said metadata database of said second server without storing the real data pertaining to said metadata at a predetermined time interval.

9. (New) A computer-readable medium comprising computer-executable instructions contained therein which, when executed, carry out the functions of:

saving metadata pertaining to real data stored in databases distributed on a network in first servers distributed on the network associated with each of said databases;

collecting metadata saved in said first servers and storing said metadata in a metadata database of a second server without storing the real data represented by said metadata;

extracting metadata that matches a user retrieval request from a user terminal by searching metadata stored in said metadata database, and transmitting a retrieval result including information of a location of the first server saving the metadata that matches said user retrieval request, to said user terminal;

inputting a real data retrieval condition for the database on the basis of the retrieval result of the metadata database transmitted to said user terminal;

issuing a real data retrieval condition from said user terminal to the first server on the basis of said information of a location of the first server,

wherein said real data retrieval condition is issued to said first server by bypassing said second server; and

retrieving, by the first server, the real data from the corresponding database after converting said real data retrieval condition into a format which is concordant with the database

10. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 9, wherein, when the metadata which is saved in the first servers and pertaining to the real data has been updated, said metadata is stored in said metadata database of said second server without storing the real data pertaining to said metadata.

11. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 9, wherein the metadata which is saved in the first server and pertaining to the real data is stored in said metadata database of said second server without storing the real data pertaining to said metadata at a predetermined time interval.